



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Mobilizing the Pro-Life Generation

Guest(s): Kristan Hawkins

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Dr. Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson, and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: The continued fight to preserve the sanctity of life in the womb is being inundated by a growing number of young people joining the cause. Today here on Family Talk, Dr. Tim Clinton addresses the youthfulness of the pro-life movement with Kristan Hawkins, president of the organization called Students for Life. She'll talk about her passion to motivate this next generation and the church to speak out against the horrors of abortion. Kristan will also share her own pro-life story, and explain that this struggle is not just political, but it's one for basic human rights. Well, let's get to today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk with Dr. Tim Clinton and his guest, Kristan Hawkins.

Dr. Clinton: Kristan, thanks for stopping by Family Talk. We're honored, delighted to have you.

Kristan Hawkins: Thanks for having me Tim. I'm really excited you're here.

Dr. Clinton: Hey, as we get started, we're in DC.

Kristan Hawkins: We are.

Dr. Clinton: March for Life. The place has been pretty wild, kind of insane up here. Seriously, I was shocked.

Kristan Hawkins: Insane in a good way.

Dr. Clinton: But hey, the energy here though has been unbelievable. You know what really amazed me was the youthfulness of the crowd.

Kristan Hawkins: That is the number one comment I've been hearing.

Dr. Clinton: Yeah, I was stunned. Honestly, I was stunned. Yeah. They bring their own stuff to the table.

Kristan Hawkins: Oh yeah, yeah.

Dr. Clinton: Yeah. What are you seeing? You're president of Students for Life. I think you stepped in, what, 12, 13 years ago. God's doing something there.

Kristan Hawkins: Just a little bit.

Dr. Clinton: Tell us a little bit about what is happening inside that movement.

Kristan Hawkins: Sure. Well, the Holy Spirit is definitely moving. You can see it very clearly in the youth pro-life movement. It's a huge shift, even from when I was in high school and college and started a pro-life group. I remember my first March for Life very well. There's definitely a movement going on. We're on about 1,250 campuses. We'll be about 1,300 campuses by the end of the year, high school, college.

Dr. Clinton: Started out what, maybe 100 or so?

Kristan Hawkins: There were about 100 that we thought. We thought there were about 100 existing campus pro-life groups when we launched in 2006. I was chosen to kind of lead this effort to go full time and to say we really need to go in the offensive on the campuses. There probably were fewer than 50 really after ... When we did the assessment of the lay of the land, it wasn't that good in 2006, of the student pro-life movement, but today it's up and running.

Dr. Clinton: Yeah. I saw middle school kids. I saw high schoolers, college students. I think law students, med students.

Kristan Hawkins: Yes. Yes, you did.

Dr. Clinton: All kinds of students. Students, students everywhere. Some people say get them young, but there's something stirring. There's a little bit more than that. There's a strategy here. Of course, we're going to talk about it.

Kristan Hawkins: Absolutely.

Dr. Clinton: But there's something going on with that generation where they proudly proclaim to be the pro-life generation.

Kristan Hawkins: That's absolutely right. You look at the history of social reform in our country and other social movements, you have to win young people. Young people are our cultural drivers. We can win all the laws and the victories in the elections and everything, but if we fail to win them, everything we do right now will be erased in 20 years. I mean, we've got to win them.

I think for so long in the pro-life movement, and before we started Students for Life, there always were youth outreaches, quote unquote "youth outreaches". There was the one youth outreach person. That person also had like four other

titles. Then when budget cuts came, that kind of got fallen by the wayside, because working with young people is very hard. It's not something that's going to land you on the nightly news. It's not going to give you a lot of, I guess, fame. But we know it's so important, because if you get them on board, and we know this from the history ... Look at civil rights movement. You get young people on board, you know victory is in sight, and that's exactly what we have.

Dr. Clinton: Well, you're setting the course for the future, period.

Kristan Hawkins: Absolutely.

Dr. Clinton: You are. You know, I looked at some of the stats that kind of drive this too. 79% of Planned Parenthood clinics are within a five mile radius of a college or university.

Kristan Hawkins: That's right.

Dr. Clinton: I saw this, 52% of those seeking an abortion are under the age of 25, and probably between ... Under the age of 30, it goes way up there.

Kristan Hawkins: That's right. That's right.

Dr. Clinton: That's the generation we've got to reach. You guys want to train these students. You're not just activating them. You're training them. I saw where you had like almost 100,000 kids trained. Tell us about that. What's going on? I want to talk about those 24 hours when a young lady makes a decision and stepping into that moment, but tell us about, what are you training these students to do?

Kristan Hawkins: Sure. Yeah. Well, we're training them to lead. They have that pro-life conviction in their head, in their heart, and the question is, how do you go and be the hands and feet, right? How do you speak eloquently? How do you speak in a way that's going to convert and change minds? How do you speak into a woman who's in crisis on campus, and how do you do that?

We're on campuses. We're meeting students in churches and parishes online saying, "You can do this. You've been called to do this. And we've done it, so let us help you. Let us walk beside you in this and mentor you and really be with you through the whole process, because we know it's going to be hard. There are going to be people who oppose you, your administration, maybe some of your professors or your teachers, and we can be there to make sure that you can have the most effective outreach on campus."

We're training them in leadership, apologetics, how to speak, how to transform their campus through our Pregnant on Campus program to say not only should you be advocating against abortion, but you should also be saying, "Here's what we can do. Here's how we can be with you so you don't ever have to feel like

you have to choose between your child and your education, that you know you can do both.”

Dr. Clinton: Yeah, that 24 hour window.

Kristan Hawkins: Sure.

Dr. Clinton: That's a big moment-

Kristan Hawkins: It is.

Dr. Clinton: When she's sitting there, maybe he and her are sitting there trying to figure out, “are we going to keep this child or not?” What gets done in that 24 hour window is everything. Meaning whoever steps into that moment, having people accessible, and most kids are influenced by their peers. Sometimes they still go to parents, but more than likely, they're going to have that conversation with someone their own age, their friends.

Kristan Hawkins: That's right.

Dr. Clinton: You know what I mean? My confidante, my girlfriend.

Kristan Hawkins: You're just making the case for why these young people are so important.

Dr. Clinton: Yeah. Let's talk about how significant that is, because I don't want people to miss this. This is important. It's a 24 hour window.

Kristan Hawkins: It is.

Dr. Clinton: If we don't get there, if the church doesn't get there-

Kristan Hawkins: Yeah. I mean, that's what we talk about a lot on campuses of leaving a sign of hope. All year long as a Student for Life, you should be sidewalk chalking, putting up flyers, leaving signs of hope on campus, getting diaper decks in the bathrooms. Sometimes it's not even about how many women are using the diaper decks. Just so she sees it, because you're right. You have 24 hours or less. In some cases, you may have mere minutes before she goes into her phone, types in abortion, and guess what? The Planned Parenthood down the street has paid a lot to be the first result on that search engine, right? You've kind be leaving signs of hope all year round that it might just be possible.

I think it's hard for us, especially if someone who hasn't experienced a crisis pregnancy of understanding that tunnel vision that she's in, that crisis, that there's no way out. “I'm stuck, and there's one path.” You've got to go in that tunnel with her with that flashlight, and you have to say, “I found another way out. Let me take your hand. Let me lead you out.”

That's what you have to do, and that's what we're called to do as Christians. I think it's hard when the church doesn't talk about-

Dr. Clinton: They won't.

Kristan Hawkins: They won't talk about it. We have a lot of pastors out there who are very pro-life, but they don't know how to talk about it. They feel uncomfortable talking about it. They say, "Well, I don't want to talk about abortion, because then I know there's women suffering from abortion. So if I talk about it, I'm going to trigger them and hurt them." Well, not talking about it isn't going to help them find healing, right?

Dr. Clinton: They'll go somewhere else for the answer.

Kristan Hawkins: Exactly. Not talking about it is why we're here in the first place. I mean, you think about the statistics, and one statistic you didn't mention was that a majority of women who obtain abortions say they went to church at least one time in the past month. We did a poll a few years ago. We found only 6% of Protestant pastors said their church had a pro-life outreach.

Dr. Clinton: You know, this came to life for me a number of years ago. I was in my office. I can still see where I was seated. The phone rings, and someone close to me says, "Here. You talk to 'em." I said, "What?"

Kristan Hawkins: "Who is this?"

Dr. Clinton: It was one of those, "We're on our way to an abortion clinic, and she's going to have an abortion. I don't know what to say. Here, you talk to her." It was like, whoa. It came to life for me. You know that. God moved in that moment. Paul said we need to have a reason for the hope that lies deep within us. We need to be prepared to speak into those moments and those things where we need to learn what to say when you don't know what to say and what to do when you don't know what to do, Kristan, because lives literally are at stake here. You know that.

I love your passion. They say you've got a little sassiness to you. I can see that. It's coming to life here a little bit. Everybody has a story, and I want to move into that space just for a moment, because I think you've got a little story piece here that also drives you. But let me say this.

Hey. You're listening to Family Talk, a production of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm your host, Dr. Tim Clinton, president of the American Association of Christian Counselors and executive director of the James Dobson Family Institute. Thanks for joining us.

By the way, thanks for supporting us. You can learn a lot more about what's happening at Family Talk. This place is busy and God is at work, and it's so

encouraging to see what continues to go on through this ministry. You can learn more at our website, drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org.

I'm speaking today with Kristan Hawkins. She's the president of Students for Life. It's an incredible organization. It's exploding. If you don't believe me, take a look at the pictures at the March for Life. You'll see what's happening.

Kristan Hawkins: You'll see my work on full display.

Dr. Clinton: Hey, from 100 or so, whatever it was, to 1,200, 1,300 now chapters all over the country on college campuses, by the way, where it needs to be. By the way, the church needs to be engaged in this conversation, and we need chapters in churches and more. We do.

Kristan Hawkins: Amen. And we will come to your church. Our regional coordinators are spread out all throughout the country. Speak to your youth group. We love youth groups, because, we want to start as many groups as possible, and there can be kids from four or five schools in one youth group. We love churches.

Dr. Clinton: Kristan, again, something happens when kids engage on something here.

Kristan Hawkins: With their peers, yeah.

Dr. Clinton: It's beautiful to go to the Passion Conference or whatever. It's beautiful to see your son or daughter stepping into a moment and taking on an issue and saying, "I'm going to stand because I believe in this," and take it on as an issue.

Kristan Hawkins: It absolutely is, and I think it's so important. When you're talking about those first moments, for example there of how do you speak into a woman who's in crisis? How do you get in that tunnel and lead her out? To have a peer, someone her own age, because that's often something we often hear is, "You don't understand the pressure I'm in. You don't understand what it's like for me." You can have someone to say, "Yeah, I'm right there with you, but I'm willing to be here for you every step of the way."

I think that for me is what's so incredible about this pro-life generation is that they're not political activists. Those kids you saw at the March for Life yesterday, they weren't there because their blood gets pumping about Republican politics or the election. They're there because they love people. They love all people, and that's why they serve.

Dr. Clinton: Little story piece here, and there's a narrative behind every person. I was reading about you and your family, your four kiddos. I love their names by the way.

Kristan Hawkins: You're getting very counselor. You're asking-

Dr. Clinton: Gunner, Bear, Maverick, Gracie. I mean, it's all-American right there. I'm talking, let's go. Two of your children have cystic fibrosis. I know for you guys, that's probably a joy and a journey.

Kristan Hawkins: It is, absolutely. That's a good way of saying it.

Dr. Clinton: You know, when I think about abortion, you hear a lot more people talking about selective or discriminatory abortion or whatever it is, whatever the terms are here. But cystic fibrosis would be up on that list and more. You know that?

Kristan Hawkins: 95% of children who are diagnosed in the womb of CF are aborted in America today, and that's from a report this September.

Dr. Clinton: Wow.

Kristan Hawkins: 68% of children who are diagnosed with Down syndrome are aborted in the womb.

Dr. Clinton: Kristan, do you mind sharing a little bit about your kids and what's in your heart here? Because I think, yeah, this makes sense to me.

Kristan Hawkins: It does. You know, I was a pro-life advocate before I had Gunner, before I became a mother. You know, it only becomes more real, right? The moment you become pregnant, then you feel your child kick within you, and you give birth, and your whole world changes. You think it's not, but it totally does. It's nothing like owning a dog. I sometimes hear, "Oh, my dog is my baby." I'm like, no, no, wait till you have this child. Wait till you bring this other human soul into existence.

Dr. Clinton: We have a brand new little grand baby, And I mean just it's happening all over again. It is.

Kristan Hawkins: It is, yeah.

Dr. Clinton: All over again for us as a family.

Kristan Hawkins: I heard that grand babies are way more fun than kids.

Dr. Clinton: Wow.

Kristan Hawkins: Because you can hop them up on sugar and do whatever you want, give them toys.

Dr. Clinton: Papa can't wait to get her to ... we call it Monkey Joe's. That's the local ice cream place down the street.

Kristan Hawkins: Yep, and then the parent's got to deal with it. My mom said, "You know, if I had known about this grandparent thing, I would've just skipped the parent and gone straight to grandparent."

But no, it really hits home with the CF diagnosis that we've had to think that so many in our country believe that children like Gunnar and Gracie shouldn't be here, that because they will suffer in their life. I get asked this question probably every campus I'm on. I go to a lot of college campuses and I try to stir up as much to debate as a possible while I'm there, because I don't really enjoy speaking to crowds that just really like me. I want to speak to crowds that hate me that I can convert. I can change hearts and minds.

This question of suffering comes up, and it's not coming from a bad place, but it's often coming from a misguided compassion sort of place of, well, these are people who are going to suffer, so isn't it better that we abort them?

I think we actually have a challenge within our country and even within the Christian Church of talking about suffering. Is there a point to suffering? Is it all senseless? Does good come from suffering? Does, because you're going to suffer, does that disqualify your value and your dignity, or does your suffering change you? Does it change the people around you?

I think that that's a very real conversation we need to have. Suffering is now seen as it's an absolute. It's a moral evil to suffer.

Dr. Clinton: I know.

Kristan Hawkins: We want to rid the world of suffering. We're Christians, right? We want to go to a place where there is no suffering. But we know as long as we're here on earth, there's going to be suffering, and it's a part of our experience as human beings.

I think we just, I think we need to have a good conversation even within the church, because I remember when Gunnar was diagnosed. It was very hard. My husband lost his faith for a number of years and still struggles with if there is a God, why would he give us a child who's going to suffer? Why would my child suffer? Why would he allow a child to suffer? I think that's very hard for some people to think about that and try to process that. What is suffering?

Dr. Clinton: Yeah. Would you mind speaking to, because there are those who are listening who in this moment we'd be remiss to think... she's been waiting and she's been waiting for a word from the Lord. There are tears in her eyes, maybe his eyes right now, too, and they're saying, "We identify with you." What has God given to you that you hold onto?

Kristan Hawkins: You know, I'm the ultimate control freak. I know that actually I'm not really in control of everything. He's in control, and he has a plan. He has a plan for Gunnar and Gracie's life. I don't know how long that life will be, but I don't know

how long my life will be either. But I know while they're here, their lives have value, their lives have meaning, and they're transforming the world. They're changing the world just by simply being Gunner and Gracie.

That's what all of us can do. That's what I spoke about with the students earlier today is that a question of, are you just living your life or are you living a life well lived, and how do you live that well lived life?

I think if you know someone who's received an adverse prenatal diagnosis, who's been told, "just go ahead and have the abortion, try again," I would question that and say, is this abortion really going to help my child, or is it simply going to maybe make it easier for me? Are they thinking it's just going to be easier for me? Because I think that's what we hear often is "I don't want to bring a child into the world that's going to suffer," and what we really hear is "I don't want to have to watch my child go through that."

Because I'm pretty sure, I've actually never met anyone who suffers, who has a medical illness, who is in pain, who wishes they just were never here. They're glad that they have the ability to live life. It's actually for us, those who don't have cystic fibrosis or haven't received these diagnosis, it's hard on us because as parents, I would do anything to take away my children's suffering. Give me the cystic fibrosis, right? I can't. I don't have control of that, and I have to watch that.

I think that's what we have to think. Are we doing this because we love our child so much? Do we love our child so much we're paying someone to induce a heart attack and kill our child, or are we afraid that we're going to hurt and it's going to be painful? There's no good way of saying that, right? There's going to be loss in my life, but I'm going to be so, so grateful that I chose life for my children, that I had whatever years I have with them. There's nothing that could make me want to say I wish I wouldn't have had those years with them.

Dr. Clinton: I'm reminded of Psalm 46. It says, "Elohim. God is our refuge and our strength. He's a present help in times of trouble." It's hard going through seasons, dark times.

Kristan Hawkins: It is.

Dr. Clinton: "Therefore we won't fear, though the earth be removed and the mountains be cast into the depths of the sea." He's in the midst of it. Verse 5, he's in the midst of it. Verse 6, he's in the midst of it. 7, 8, 9, he's in the midst of it. Then there's that verse, "Be still and know that I am God."

Kristan Hawkins: Wow.

Dr. Clinton: When everything's gone, you have nothing else you can do. It's like a prize fighter releasing his hands. He's dropping his hands and he's saying, "God, I

don't have anything here. I've got nothing left." "I will be exalted. I'll be in the midst of it. I'll give you the grace you need."

Kristan Hawkins: That's right.

Dr. Clinton: It's so hard, man. We think of and pray for you in a different way.

Kristan Hawkins: Please do.

Dr. Clinton: In my mind, it's probably a lot to do with what God's done in your heart that leads you the way you lead. You know that. We celebrate that in you.

Kristan Hawkins: Thank you.

Dr. Clinton: Kristan, I'm going to come back to Students for Life. What's your dream?

Kristan Hawkins: Sure.

Dr. Clinton: Where's this thing going, and how can we maybe get around you and support this work?

Kristan Hawkins: Yeah. Roe versus Wade will be reversed. The decision-

Dr. Clinton: You really believe it?

Kristan Hawkins: I do. I believe 2020-

Dr. Clinton: In our lifetime?

Kristan Hawkins: In our lifetime. This year will actually determine it. 2020 will determine it. It's a big year, and we have to prepare. That's actually what we're doing in the national summit today. It's why we've united these pro-life organizations. I've asked all my friends to partner with us, because now is the time to prepare like we've never prepared before. The fight isn't just in Washington, DC. It's going to go to every single state capitol. It's going to be every single community, college campus, church.

What I think we need to do and what I've been focusing on getting our movement to do is really talk about what we're doing, the resources we have. Be better marketers, right, for our movement to say, you're not alone. We have all these resources. This is a question I ask pro-lifers and Christians all the time is, do you know where your local pregnancy center is? Do you advertise it? Does your church talk about it? Does everybody at your church know if a woman in their life is in crisis, where to drive her to, what number to call? The majority do not know.

I think the other place we really need to start focusing on is medical abortions, chemical abortions. The number of surgical abortion facilities is declining. It's the lowest it's been since the high in the 80s and 90s. The number of surgical abortions is the lowest it's been since 1980, but what's on the rise are chemical abortions.

The abortion industry reads the same polls we read. Second, third trimester abortions, nobody wants those. But what they will try to propose as a European type of abortion law. They'll say, "Fine, fine. We're going to compromise. No second and third trimester, but first trimester," which is where 90% of abortions are committed. That won't be a compromise, but they'll say it is.

Dr. Clinton: Yeah, yeah.

Kristan Hawkins: What their solution has been is, oh, the RU486 pill. You don't have to go in and dismember a baby, or suck a baby apart, or induce a heart attack. You give her a pill. You're less, as a doctor, hands on. You tell her to sit on the toilet and flush. We call them toilet bowl abortions.

One of our core values at Students for Life is being innovative. Where is the battle going? And we need to rush to that battle. One thing that gives me hope, there was a poll that was released yesterday, I saw it on Fox News, a Kaiser poll, not a pro-life group, not a pro-life polling company. 49% of American said in this poll that abortion should be banned when fetal heartbeat activity is detected.

Dr. Clinton: That's a big deal.

Kristan Hawkins: But those 49% don't know when the child's heart begins to beat or that every-

Dr. Clinton: 18 days.

Kristan Hawkins: Or that every single abortion in the country is committed after the heart has already begun to beat, because she doesn't even know she's pregnant until after the child's heart has already begun to beat. That's our next. I was actually emailing our team at 2:00 this morning going, "Here we go. This is our rallying cry this spring. We have to tell women, this is where ... this is the point. At 18 days, your child's heart begins to beat."

Dr. Clinton: Yeah.

Kristan Hawkins: We commonly measure death by the sensation of a beating heart. Now, there's philosophical concerns of sometimes when does death actually occur, but it's very easy. I know life does not begin at a heartbeat, because we actually know it's when the sperm and egg unite, and I commonly have to talk about high school biology to protesters all the time. But surely we can agree that when there's a beating heart, there is life.

Dr. Clinton: Yeah. There's life. Kristan, we're fighting the clock. Some of what we heard while we were here at the March for Life was that this movement's winning. This movement is winning, and there's a lot to celebrate and be encouraged about, but there's so much to do.

Kristan Hawkins: There is.

Dr. Clinton: We've got to step into this moment. God help us.

Kristan Hawkins: We do.

Dr. Clinton: Let's pray the church awakens and takes her rightful place.

Kristan Hawkins: Amen.

Dr. Clinton: That means people of faith who would dare to care for life.

Kristan Hawkins: The church must lead on this.

Dr. Clinton: Kristan, thanks for all you're doing.

Kristan Hawkins: Thank you.

Dr. Clinton: Thanks for the ministry of Students for Life. We will pray for and with you-

Kristan Hawkins: Please do.

Dr. Clinton: That God will continue to do a great work.

Kristan Hawkins: Thank you.

Dr. Clinton: Thanks for joining us.

Roger Marsh: You've been listening to a captivating interview with Kristan Hawkins of Students for Life on today's edition of Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. As we close for the day, I want to remind you, this November is the national election, and it offers two distinctly divergent paths for America. Dr. Dobson expresses his concerns in his August newsletter. He's outlined several critical issues for you to consider before you go to the polls. Visit drjamesdobson.org/faithvotes to find out more. Once again, that's drjamesdobson.org/faithvotes.

Thanks so much for listening today, and thanks for praying for our ministry as well. We are entirely listener supported, and we rely on your generosity to continue doing this God-honoring work. For information on how you can stand with us financially, visit us at drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org, or call (877) 732-6825. That's (877) 732-6825. From all of us here at the James

Dobson Family Institute, I'm Roger Marsh wishing you a healthy and blessed day.

Announcer:

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